



Returning ancestral remains overseas

Presented by Te Arikirangi Mamaku, Kaitohutohu Kōiwi tangata (Te Papa)
for the third Ngākahu workshop, 14 July 2020

Karanga Aotearoa Repatriation Programme

- ▶ Established in 2003 as the NZ governments agent for the repatriation of Maori and Moriori ancestral remains, and Toi Moko, facilitated by Te Papa
- ▶ undertake research, negotiate and facilitate the return of Maori and Moriori ancestral remains and Toi moko, engage with Maori and Moriori to repatriate kōiwi with provenance, and discuss solutions for the long-term care of unprovenanced kōiwi tangata
- ▶ Karanga Aotearoa is supported by a Repatriation Advisory Panel consisting of kaumātua, iwi and Moriori representatives, academics, and language experts.
- ▶ Guided by a Cabinet Paper and Te Papa's Kōiwi tangata policy
- ▶ Since 2003 over 600 kōiwi/kōimi tangata and Toi moko have been repatriated

Purpose and Outline

The purpose of this presentation is to provide some practical guidance regarding repatriation for the Ngākahu network.

- 1) Obligations and considerations
- 2) Process
- 3) Repatriating to the Native American Lummi Nation
- 4) Final thoughts



Obligations and considerations

- ▶ Policy
- ▶ Collection information and research
- ▶ Engagement and communication
- ▶ Tikanga
- ▶ Process



POLICY

Obligations and considerations

Your organisations formal position on releasing human remains from its collection determines a large part of your process. This often provides what your options are for returning ancestors to their communities; deaccession for full and final repatriation, or long-term loan. If there's no formal position you will need to refer to the Collection Management Policy.

The policy should answer questions such as how claims/requests can be made, who approves claims, and what the approval stages are.



COLLECTION INFORMATION AND RESEARCH

Obligations and considerations

Your research should be thorough and complete (or at least as complete as possible). Associated collectors and locations of collection/trade are important in determining the appropriate groups, organisations, and communities to engage with.



Engagement and communication

Obligations and considerations

Reuniting communities with their ancestors is an amazing and humbling experience to be a part of, but the process can also be filled with challenges. A significant challenge is engaging with all the right groups.

Seeking the advice from overseas Museums and community organisations helps understand the cultural landscape. We also highly recommend formalising partnerships (Memoranda of understanding, official letters) and maintaining those records is very important in documenting your process.

- ▶ Make sure you're talking to all the right people
- ▶ Maintain a record of communications, agreements, M.o.U's

Tikanga

Obligations and considerations

Your process should always include a mechanism where your organisation is seeking the advice and guidance of your own Mana-whenua, and/or taumata kaumātua.



Process

Obligations and considerations

Ensure that your process is aligned with your Museum's policy, especially how your organisation receives and handles/approves claims. Also, commit towards spending a bit of time establishing who all the stakeholders are before shifting towards receiving or opening the claim/request stage.

Finally, ensure that your process respects and acknowledges the cultural practices and perspectives of the community.

PROCESS

Enquiry/ request

- Passive and active enquiries
- Refer to your institutions policy/ies

Managing the enquiry

- Activate your process, check your collection records and verify the information
- Identify your stakeholders
- Explain your process and timeframes. Request additional information if required

Formal request

- Letters of endorsement and support of a community group and claim are very useful
- Discuss the request with you advisory group, kaumātua and mana whenua

Agreement

- Long-term/short-term loan can lead to complete transfer
- Conditional agreements should stipulate a review schedule

Planning

- Ensure your documentation is in order
- Engage with Embassies, Ministries for Culture and Ministries Foreign Affairs for export/import obligations

Transfer

- Documentation to include; signed transfer agreement, pro-forma invoice, collection and research reports, and conservation assessment if required.

Repatriating to Native American Lummi Nation

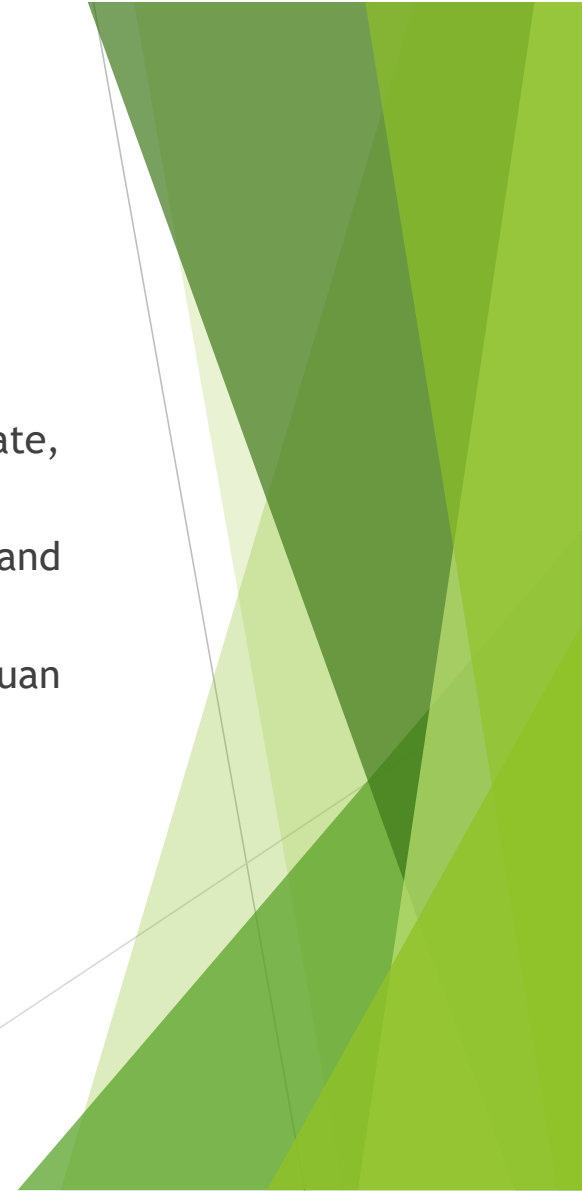
An example of process

In 2018 Te Papa repatriated a skull to the Lummi people from Washington State, USA.

The skull was donated to the collections of the National Museum of New Zealand by Prof. Keith Westhead Thomson.

Records and display information state that the skull was obtained in the San Juan Islands, Washington State, by Prof. Thomson.

The process from enquiry to transfer took approx. 5 years.



PROCESS

Enquiry

- March 2013 representatives from Te Papa meet with National Museum of the American Indian
- June 2013 Karanga Aotearoa contacts Lummi Tribal Council

Engagement

- September 2014 Te Papa representatives meet with elders and council members on their reservation in Washington State, USA

Formal request

- September 2017 Formal request made by Lummi Tribal Council to Te Papa, and submitted to the Board for support
- Claim endorsed and supported by Karanga Aotearoa, and the Repatriation advisory panel.
- Approved in late-2017 for full and final repatriation

Planning

- Karanga Aotearoa further supported the return by coinciding the transfer with work underway in the USA
- The ancestor was to be received on Lummi ancestral lands and placed in the care of their repatriation office

Transfer

- June 2018 Karanga Aotearoa transports the ancestor to the USA which is transferred to the care of the Lummi people

Final thoughts

Know your **policy** and **process**

Ensure your **research** is thorough and complete

Be **vigilant** in ensuring you're **engaging with the right people**

Engage with your **Iwi** and **kaumātua**

Take your lead from the community